

d. Judges 6:11-8:35 "And Israel was brought very low because of **Midian (after seven years)**, and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord," and the Lord sent a prophet . . . and **Gideon**.

e. Judges 10:6-11:40 Then they were in bondage to the **Philistines and to the children of Ammon for eighteen years**, "and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord," and His answer was **Jephthah**.

It is the same story each time. The only alteration is in the name of the people to whom they were in bondage, the name of the deliverer sent in answer to their prayer, and the number of years in which they were held in bondage. In all the cases, except the last, we simply have the record "the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." What they said we do not know. In the last case, however, we have their prayer recorded. Perhaps it is a fair specimen of the prayers of former occasions. They said: "We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim."

2. Principles of the Stories.

a. They cried out to God.

The revivals in the times of the Judges show that prayer occupies a principal part in the return of any people to the Lord. The word "cry" is suggestive of the type of prayer that issues in blessing. It is the word most frequently used in the Old Testament to describe prayer. It speaks of distress. We cry out when we are in trouble. When Peter was sinking in the water he cried, "Lord, save me." The word cry tells of a distress that is felt. These people had been in uncomfortable circumstances for years, but the full meaning of their lot had not come home to them, and distressed their spirits, until now. But now they feel the shame and disgrace of their condition. The word suggests a need that is urgent. Peter could not wait for help when he cried. He wanted assistance at once. These people said: "Only deliver us, we pray Thee, this day." The word also speaks of a feeling of helplessness. They require some power from outside to come to their relief. They are in bondage. They cannot deliver themselves. They want a leader, a Savior.

Often when men are in bondage to sin, they are unconcerned. They are content with their bonds. They do not feel the shame and the disgrace of their position. And, while in that condition, there is no deliverance for them. But when they realize the power and tyranny of that to which they have sold themselves; when they discover the havoc it is playing with their constitutions, their minds, their characters, and their futures; when they see that it is imperative for them to be set free; and when they wake up to the fact that they have no power to recover themselves, and that they need a Savior. Then if they cry to the Lord He will help them.

These petitions are wholly for themselves. Their personal distress has called them forth. They do not pray for the sake of others, nor with any desire for the glory of God. The cry has been forced from them. Not until they could not help praying did they pray. They were in a corner. They had had no use for God when things seemed bright. They only came to Him when they could not do without Him. There was unmistakably an element of meanness in their attitude. Their cry was not for-power with which to serve God, but simply for deliverance from a cruel bondage.

What was in their prayers is in the same thing that is in the prayers of most of us when we first begin to pray in earnest. Our earliest prayers are for ourselves. They are forced from us by some trouble. We have forgotten God, and given our heart and strength to our own interests and desires. When the fear of the harvest of our sins comes home to us, the fear of death and of judgement, we cry unto God. The first real prayers of many of us were selfish. A higher type comes later. Not until we are delivered do we begin to pray for others, and to long for God's name to be known and honored. It is fear, and bondage, and trouble, that make us first cry out.

But it is this cry which God hears. He begins with us where we are. He does not wait until we have been raised to a certain level before He listens. He hearkens to our cry as sinners first. He makes us saints, and then we pray as saints. But in the first place it is the cry of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," that is heard. This is where the Gospel comes in, and where there is hope for us all. If God would not help us until we were on a higher platform of desire than the selfish one, we never should be heard. We cannot get higher until God hears our prayer and delivers us from sin and self.

b. There was confession .

Let us notice what this cry of children of Israel included. There was Confession. They said: "We have sinned." And the confession was particular: "We have forsaken our God, we have served the Baalim." They knew wherein they had sinned, and they acknowledged their particular offence. The promise of forgiveness is preceded by the words, "if we confess our sins." It is not a general confession of sinnership that is required; that is acknowledged by all; but a particular confession of individual sinfulness

c. God always hears .

1 John 1:9 reminds us God is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse.

3. Lessons from the Stories.

This is not the first time these people had acknowledged their transgressions. They are backsliders once again returning to God.

a. Return to God is not easy .

No, return to God is not easy. In this case the Lord said He would not hear them. He said: "Did I not save you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and Maonites did oppress you; and ye cried unto Me, and I saved you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken Me, and served other gods; wherefore I will save you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress." God practically told them that they had made a convenience of Him, and He was not going to have that done any more. Let them go to those whom they were serving. That was a perfectly fair proposition.

It is not as easy, after repeated falls, to come back to God. The haunting fear of whether it will last, the remembrance of repeated failings, and the recollection that we have meant well before, but have not been able to continue, all hinder us. Then repeated sinning makes us greater slaves to evil. Habits have become a part of us. It is not easy coming back to God after several falls.

b. Return comes with a price .

And it ought not to be easy. It is quite right that it should get harder, and that we should know it and feel it. It will make us more careful, and make us feel that to slip again is only to add to the difficulties of repentance. If we get the idea that God receives us as readily and easily each time, some amongst us may be forever sinning and repenting. Forgiveness is wonderfully free on God's part, but it is not easy.

Forgiveness is not an easy thing with us, and it is not an easy thing with God. Before the remission of sins could be preached as a Gospel to the whole world, it was necessary for Christ to die. It cost God His Son to make forgiveness free to us. We must not have light views concerning the pardon of our sins.

c. Return is always possible .

But though it is harder to get back, return is possible. These people persevered. They said: "We have sinned: do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee; only deliver us, we pray Thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord." They valued forgiveness and deliverance. They became more urgent. And to their confession they added action. They gave a guarantee of their genuineness in that they gave up the things which were wrong; and, before deliverance came, they began to serve the Lord. There are evils that must be put away, and acts of obedience rendered before assurance of acceptance can come to the soul. Repentance, surrender to Christ, and confession of Him before men, must accompany prayer. Actions as well as plaintive speech are required to show that we are in earnest. We are to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

Conclusion:

The cry of the children of Israel moved God. "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." God is unchangeable, but He is not immovable like a rock. His heart can be touched. There are things that appeal to Him. Genuine repentance, distress, strong desire, these things touch Him, and He responds. He will not leave a true man alone. If you really are anxious to be better, and to be delivered, God will come to your aid. "Wilt thou be made whole," He says. "If any man will come after Me," "Whosoever will." Where there is a will God will find a way to bless. "Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness and shall be filled."

God's Heart Can Be Touched!

Oh, Camp!

As you well know, my week has been spent at Grand Oaks with about 140 of my favorite people. It's Thursday at the time of this writing and tomorrow's departure is drawing near. Can't wait to get home! Yet there are so many things that must be done before the next adventure – the mission trip to Yankton in July. Although, one of my favorite people to go to camp with isn't here. Don Beavers has been missed on an hourly basis. His many years of experience and attention to pertinent details cannot be easily replaced. Don, you are loved!

The atmosphere at camp has been really good. So far there haven't been any big conflicts and campers are very easy going. I can't recall a time when we've had so many that do not yet know the Lord as their Savior and know very little about Him. It is truly a mission field and God's Spirit is working in many hearts. Some have never before faced the question of whether they will go to heaven when they die. Last night there were five decisions for salvation. Praise the Lord! Even when camp is over they need our prayers to keep on searching and growing in their newfound faith.

In the 70's and early 80's there was an obsession with UFO's and making connections with alien life forms. One of the key films at the heart of this craze was *Close Encounters of the*

Third Kind. There is a desperate search in mankind to find life outside of earth. We can search and search but the only place to find true life is the Lord God Almighty who fills all and is in all. You don't have to travel to the far ends of the universe to find Him. You merely have to open your eyes, open your heart, open the Bible and you will meet the one who exists on the far reaches of the universe and also exists right here. The very word "Encounter" means 'to come upon face to face.' He wants to meet with you – to have an encounter with you not just as a one-time thing but every day.

That's what going to camp is all about – getting away from the world to have an encounter with God. In Genesis 18 Abraham and Sarah encountered God. He made a surprise visit to their tent home. He came in the form of a man along with two angels by his side that also appeared as men. What are we to do when we seek to encounter God?

First, we must welcome Him (verses 1-5). Then after welcoming Him, the next crucial part of an encounter with God is serving Him (verses 6-8). Abraham very quickly mobilized his wife to bake some cake or bread. He slaughtered a calf and roasted it. He served them milk and cheese. Some theologians debate that this was the first fast food. Next, he poured out his heart to him (18:9, 13) and last he listened to him (18:10-15).

May we all be encouraged to not miss those precious God encounters. Welcome Him! Worship Him. Pour out your heart to Him. Listen to Him. And you will be renewed, refreshed, and encouraged for a new day!

God Bless You!

Bro. Allan

Opportunities For Service

Living out Your Spiritual Commitment... and Fulfilling Christ's Divine Plan

Sunday, June 25, 2017

Choir Rehearsal.....9:00 am

Sunday School.....9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: Larry McKahan, Bill Schottel, Ken Kirkpatrick, Isaac Waters

Alternate: Ken Nice

Diversicare Worship ...2:30 pm

Mission Trip Meeting.....3 pm

No Evening Worship.....

Wednesday, June 28

Youth Bible Study.....6:30 pm

Prayer/Bible Study.....6:30 pm

Adult Choir.....7:30 pm

Thursday, June 29

O Team.....6:30 pm

Sunday, July 2, 2017

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: ? ? ? ?, Ken Nice, Fred Kerns, Don Sharp
Alternate: Isaac Waters

Tuesday, July 4

Independence Day!

Wednesday, July 5

Youth Study..... 6:30 pm
Prayer / Bible Study6:30 pm
Adult Choir 7:30 pm

Thursday, July 6

W Team.....6:30 pm

Up-Coming Events.....

June 25 — Worship Service at Diversicare, 2:30 pm

— Mission Trip Meeting, 3:00 pm

July 4 — Independence Day

July 8-14 — SJBA Youth and Adult Mission Trip to Yankton

July 12 — Prayer Warriors 10:00 am

July 16 — Fellowship Dinner and Business Meeting

— Collect for Food Pantry

July 17-21 — Saint Joseph Baptist Association Children's Camp

July 23-27 — Vacation Bible School

GROW Team

Commit to **GROW!** Everyone make a contact! Invite someone to Bible Study and Worship this week. ☺

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Sunday Nights

Tonight we will not have church due our worship service at Diversicare. Join us next week as we continue our study from Chip Ingram on *Why I Believe*. Hope to see you next week.

Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study

This week our study is *O* by Max Lucado. Come and discover how you can make a difference. Hope to see you here at 6:30 pm!

Children's Camp

...forms are available.

**Children's Camp is
July 17-21.**

Campers must have completed the 4th—6th grades.

Vacation Bible School

July 23-27

Mark your calendar!

Let Ellen know if you are willing to serve and
what age group.

Associational Youth and Adult Mission Trip

July 8-14, 2017

We will minister in Yankton, South Dakota. Please be praying for the team as they serve.

Save the Date!
Area Men's Retreat

August 19
8 am to 3 pm

Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church

Diversicare Nursing Home

Today, June 25, 2017

2:30 pm

Please join us as we
minister to those who can no longer attend their
own churches.

FELLOWSHIP DINNER AND BUSINESS MEETING

Sunday, July 16,

Immediately following the Morning Worship Service.

For the Record-

Attendance: June 18, 2017

Sunday School.....	23
Visitors.....	0
Total.....	23
Contacts Made.....	0
Morning Worship.....	42
Children's Worship.....	N/A
Sunday Night	N/A
Wednesday Night	N/A

Financial Record:

Weekly Budget \$ 2,040.52
Offering Received ... \$ 956.52

Offering Received by Mail:

July Counting Team:

Fred Kerns and Jordan Lane

July Van Driver:

George Burgess
Call 232-3747 before 8 am

July Member Birthdays:

02... Mary Sharp
05... Kathryn Beavers
15... Bill Schottel
17... Betty Anslinger
20... Dorothy Post
23... Flora McKahan
24... Allan Lane
26... Jack Conard
26... Annette Schottel
30... Bill Haskins

July Anniversaries

Don and Mary Sharp

July 3, 1970

Gary and Sharon Yarbrough

July 8, 1978

Don and Marcia Hart

July 15, 1973

Larry and Flora McKahan

July 29, 1966

Prayer Requests ...

Larry Danner—cancer
Juanita and Bill Haskins
Jo and Elmer Mayse
Emily Jones, Tammy Panning
Irma Wood—Lillian Williams friend
Gina Harr—recovery (and Randy)
Rosella Davis—Flo Conard's sister
Pat Means—Mary Sharp's Sister
Bill Clinton—Don and Mae's son
Stephanie and Jason Terpack
Mary Sharp's brother-in-law Jim
Don and Marcia —Don's Health
Troy Griswold—cancer treatment
Tracy Maisel and Tim Ford
Gary & Peggy Fewins and family
Cynthia Burdick—cancer recovery
Karissa and Matt Long and family

Lisa Bowers—Jack and Flo's daughter

LoLeta Middleton—strength

Elvera's daughter & daughter-in-law

Stella Davis and Linda Rails—Doris

Richardson's sisters

Rev. A. B. Brown Betty Campbell

George Ferbert Larry Danner

Ellen Blanton Lois Ulmer

Jim Winans Nellie Reynolds

Madeline Swink Ann Riddle

Kathryn Beavers Keon McKahan

Louanne Laurence Leona Reynolds

Jozy Winans Kenny Duty

Kevin Duty Buddy Means

Bill Haskins Debbie Sands

Pat Puckett Judy Anderson

Brenda Burgess Roscoe Lane

Carolyn Houts Tim Izer

Nickolay Nazaruk, Peski 2 Church

David and Deborah Grace

Our Nation and Leaders

Our Military Service people

Today's Prayer Requests ...

Our Nation and our Leaders ...

Five More New Families...
